

**Draft Meeting Notes CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Suisun Marsh Levee Investigation Team
March 16, 2000 at 9:00 am in Room 210 of the Resources Building**

Attendance List:

Steven Chappell, Suisun Resource Conservation District
Rob Cooke, CALFED
Chris Enright, DWR Environmental Services Office
Dave Gore, US Bureau of Reclamation
Kamyar Guivetchi, DWR Environmental Services Office
Gwen Knittweis, CALFED (chair)
Arnold Lenk, Suisun Resource Conservation District and RD 2127
Terry Mills, CALFED
Michael Norris, DWR Central District (minutes)
Curt Schmutte, DWR Central District
Dave Showers, DWR Central District

Gwen Knittweis convened the meeting. There were no comments on the previous 2-17-2000 meeting minutes from the sub-team.

There were no major comments on Action Items from the previous meeting.

The next agenda item was an update on the biological report investigation by Terry Mills. This item was bumped up in the agenda since Terry had to leave before the meeting would be over. There was a handout and an outline. Part 4 of the outline listed Regulatory Compliance and some wondered whether this section actually belonged in the report or would be more appropriate in a "Background" section. Others like Chris Enright wondered where else the section could be placed if not right where it was. Under Section 2 (Existing Marsh Physical Description), Steve Chappell thought 2B should include an upland component, agricultural practices and grazing, and bays and sloughs. Under Part 5 (Need for Restoration), Steve asked if CALFED had a numeric goal for recovery. The MSCS had information in it according to Terry and there are a small number of species whose recovery is dependent on the Suisun Marsh. Under Part 6 (Restoration Targets), Chris thought we could end up with a number of small properties that became available from willing sellers as opposed to larger contiguous areas. Since this notion was not conveyed at the recent Public Meeting in Fairfield, it was wondered when it would be discussed. Terry thought there might be some sort of requirement such as a minimum of 1,000 contiguous acres per site.

There was a discussion of the "Goals Report" and how the public might receive it. Chris thought the outline of the biological report was critical enough to warrant a review by a separate technical advisory committee. Terry said the biologist "sub-team" could meet on 3-31-2000 for further discussion.

The next agenda item dealt with an update on the recent public outreach efforts. Chris

asked Gwen if any willing participants had come forward and Gwen noted there were a few. In addition, some people had submitted refreshing letters as a result of the recent Public Meeting. A summary of the Question and Answer section from the Public Meeting had been posted on the e-mail reflector and Kamyar had a few comments. Kamyar noted the consulting firm of Levine and Fricke did indeed do some modeling in the Montezuma Wetlands area in contrast to what was suggested in the summary notes. Kamyar also noted that the public focus appeared to be more on restoration and less on levees and he wondered why that was so. Arnold Lenk noted concern with answering "no" when it was asked whether or not it was necessary to form a Reclamation District. That answer was technically correct in the case of land acquisition but incorrect for participation in a levee program and Arnold noted it would be necessary to present the point again for clarification. Arnold noted the reference to Sunrise Club losing 4,000 feet of levee should have read "400 feet". There was a comment to get rid of the "map" that showed the potential restoration areas which included several duck clubs. Kamyar thought we needed a map that showed conversion areas spread out. Arnold noted the Ecosystem Bay meeting a few years ago left the public thinking the government is here to take their land and that could explain some of the public uneasiness. It was suggested that comments should be condensed to one page and then sent out to the meeting attendees.

Steve Chappell noted that "assurances" need to be conveyed. There is the perception that CALFED will ultimately back down on the things they are promising because of regulatory restrictions.

Kamyar wondered if CALFED Management would want to see the skeletal structure for what a levee program would look like and Rob thought they would like to see it. Gwen thought this could go into Chapter IX or X of the Investigation Report. Rob wondered about water quality impacts on a person's parcel if his neighbor sells. There were enough issues discussed to justify talking about what the next meeting will look like according to Rob. Waiting until 2 or 3 weeks before the next Public Meeting would be a mistake according to Rob.

Kamyar noted that some properties might be important because the levees are important for water quality whereas other properties are important because of their restoration potential. As an example, Arnold discussed a 100-acre site right on the Sacramento River that acts as protection for a larger 1,000-acre parcel. If the smaller site goes under, the mile or so of interior levees on the back side could also go under. However, the smaller site may not fit our "size" criteria which could make it difficult to acquire. Chris replied that if it is not possible to purchase this site for restoration, then the levees should still be maintained. Kamyar suggested purchasing the property anyway because it could give us some shallow water habitat.

Rob noted the items being discussed need to be promoted to legislators and Congress and not just the landowners.

Curt Schmutte suggested a marsh program that is modeled after the Subventions / Special

projects Programs for the Delta.

The next agenda item dealt with a draft for the Executive Summary of the modeling work. Chris Enright passed out a handout. Chris noted there would be about 100 plots and 10 tables from the DWR modeling work and he wondered how to best present this. It was thought that an Appendix would be the best place for the modeling detail. There were suggestions to post the modeling results on a web site. Kamyar liked the idea of putting a few examples of what the plots look like in the main part of the report and saving the detail for a CD. Another suggestion from Rob was to put just a few examples of plots in the Appendix and save the detail for a web site. Gwen suggested posting the draft Executive Summary on the e-mail reflector for comments. Kamyar suggested contacting the RMA consulting firm to see if they wanted their modeling work to be posted on a web site too.

With regards to a possible levee program for the marsh, Curt noted he has seen districts maintain their levees with the monies they can afford to shell out but the levees continue to go downhill. Steve sees benefits from an emergency response element. Curt thought it was cheaper to be proactive with a flood-fighting element than reactive. Also, districts will likely experience some subsidence in the first few years when they start to upgrade levees and that will drive costs up. Arnold thought that the private company Wetlands might have some records for levee maintenance in the marsh. Steve said Wetlands and Frost Construction are the main contractors for the marsh.

Curt wondered whether anyone has considered some draft legislation for the marsh. Kamyar wondered how the wording in AB360 might do to start with. Curt thought that AB360 would be a good template but the marsh is unique enough so that 50% of the wording would have to be new. The program would also have to be separate from the Delta Levees Subventions / Special Projects Programs. Steve noted that SRCD could speak with local representatives to see if such a bill could be carried.

Curt noted the "legislation" we are referring to takes care of the State dollars for the program but what about the federal dollars and which federal agency would administer the program. The Corps and USBR were thrown out as possibilities. Dave Gore didn't think the USBR would want to take on flood control and he questioned their involvement.

Gwen attempted to select a date for the next Public Meeting. The dates 7-24 and 8-21 were thrown out with the latter being a fallback date in the event the facility in Fairfield was not available that day. It was thought that the meeting would be a follow-up to the previous Public Meeting with more detailed information being presented to the landowners. There is a SRCD workshop too but Arnold thought it should be separate from the CALFED workshop. In addition, the CALFED draft report for the marsh should be released after the SRCD workshop. Curt thought it was appropriate for Steve to coordinate landowner's response to the draft report.

There is a California Suisun Marsh Field Day on Grizzly Island on June 3, 2000. It was

proposed that CALFED should acquire a booth for that event and prepare a one-page handout. Such an event could serve to build rapport for a CALFED program for the marsh.

Except for brief comments earlier in the meeting, the last agenda item dealing with Suisun Marsh Emergency Response was tabled until the next meeting. There was one Emergency Response handout for the Delta that was passed out to the group for reading before the next meeting. Gwen asked the group to consider whether a program for the marsh would work the same as the Delta.

Gwen reviewed some possible Action items for the next meeting. The next meeting of the sub-team will be on April 20, 2000 from 9-11:30 in room 1118-30.

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